What is claimed is:

1. In a computer, a method comprising steps of:

receiving handwritten user input;

recognizing the handwritten user input as a symbol; and

determining a shorthand type of the symbol out of a plurality of possible shorthand types.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of possible shorthand types includes text expansion and program.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the program is a word processing program.

4. The method of claim 1, further including a step of applying an expansion associated with the symbol.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of possible shorthand types includes text expansion and function.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of possible shorthand types includes text expansion, function, and program.

7. The method of claim 1, further including steps of:

displaying expanded text associated with the symbol, if the shorthand type is text expansion;

implementing a function associated with the symbol, if the shorthand type is function; and

launching a program associated with the symbol, if the shorthand type is program.

8. The method of claim 1, further including a step of displaying a user interface that allows a user to at least one out of the possible plurality of shorthand types to associate with the symbol.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the shorthand type is text expansion and the symbol is associated with expanded text, the method further including a step of receiving a user input defining the expanded text.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining includes comparing the symbol recognized from the handwritten user input with a stored set of a plurality of symbols, each of the plurality of symbols being associated with a different expansion.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the symbol includes a plurality of characters.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the symbol is solely alphanumeric.

13. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 1.

14. In a computer, a method comprising steps of:

receiving handwritten user input including at least first handwritten user input;

first determining whether the first handwritten user input is associated with second handwritten user input;

second determining whether the first handwritten user input represents a shorthand entry if the first handwritten user input is not associated with the second handwritten user input; and

applying a first expansion associated with the shorthand entry in response to the first handwritten user input only if the first handwritten user input is not associated with the second handwritten user input.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the first handwritten user input consists of a single word.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the first handwritten user input is solely alphanumeric.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of second determining includes steps of:

comparing the first handwritten user input with a predetermined set of symbols; and

based on the step of comparing, determining the first expansion.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the first expansion is a program.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein the second handwritten user input includes any handwritten user input other than the first handwritten user input that is simultaneously displayed with the first handwritten user input.

20. The method of claim 14, wherein the second handwritten user input consists of any handwritten user input on a same line as the first handwritten user input and simultaneously displayed with the first handwritten user input.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of first determining includes determining whether a total handwritten user input word count is equal to one, and if so, then determining that the first handwritten user input is not associated with any other handwritten user input.

22. The method of claim 14, further including a step of applying a second expansion associated with the shorthand entry in response to the first handwritten user input only if the first handwritten user input is associated with the second handwritten user input.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the first expansion is a program and the second expansion is expanded text.

24. The method of claim 14, further including third determining whether handwritten user input has stopped, the step of first determining being performed in response to determining that handwritten user input has stopped.

25. The method of claim 14, further including a step of waiting a predetermined period of non-zero time after the step of receiving, the step of first determining being performed after the step of waiting.

26. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 14.

27. In a computer, a method comprising steps of:

receiving handwritten user input;

recognizing the handwritten user input to determine a symbol;

determining whether the symbol is shorthand; and

either applying or not applying a first expansion associated with the shorthand depending upon a context of the handwritten user input.

28. The method of claim 27, further including a step of applying a second expansion associated with the shorthand if the first expansion is not applied.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the first expansion is a program and the second expansion is expanded text.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the first expansion is first expanded text and the second expansion is second different expanded text.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein the first expansion is a program.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the first expansion is expanded text.

33. The method of claim 27, wherein the first expansion is a function.

34. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 27.